

# Creative Commitment to the Aging Society

## ——Process towards Post – patriarchal Society (Part I )

### Changing from ‘Object’ to ‘Subject’——

Harueko KATO

Women and old people have long been ‘objects’ (not ‘subjects’) in patriarchal society. They have been expected to depend upon the decision making and treatment of patriarchal national and local governments or patriarchal families.

Yet, now, women and old people, especially old and ‘pre-old’ (middle-aged) women in Japan, are encountering the chance to change themselves into ‘subjects’. As ‘objects’, they are a burden for society and family. Transforming themselves into subjects means lessening the burden of men and young people — especially, young first sons who are supposed to support aging society as tax payers and breadwinners.

Transformation of objects — dependers or followers — into subjects — independent deciders or responsibility-takers — leads to the dissolution of the patriarchy and brings about a post-patriarchal system with a new culture.

This paper discusses the process of change through comparison of Japanese experience with historical experiences of some Western aging societies like England and Sweden.

The next paper (part II) will take up the old and ‘pre-old’ women’s movement in Japan and will discuss the direction Japan is likely to take through comparing Sweden, England, and the U.S.A.